

CITYVIEW

City of Hamilton Planning and Development Department

1996

HERITAGE: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

A community's heritage comes in many forms. It can be a house, a church, a streetscape, or a whole downtown; it can be a bridge, a park, or a special view to the Bay. It can be as small as an archaeological artifact or as extensive as the Escarpment. It can be man-made or natural. It can date from any era--it can be old but it does not have to be.

Heritage is all around us, not just limited to museums or the oldest monument in the City. A building or place may become so familiar to us, however, that we don't even recognize it as a valuable part of our heritage.

CITY'S HERITAGE WINS PRAISE

Special Report

Hamilton is hosting an international conference on urban planning this week with professionals coming from all over North America. How would these planners see our City? Discouraging? Promising?

Everitt Greener, an environmental planner from Pittsburgh, expressed amazement at Hamilton's transition from smokestack city to a U.N. Sustainable Development community. "It's a powerful endorsement of their natural heritage; it's the greening of Hamilton!", he exclaimed.

Transportation planner Ms. J. Ride from Buffalo agreed, "That industrial skyline we see from the Q.E.W. is misleading. I certainly didn't expect to find such an interesting mix of modern and the historical in the downtown. Fortunately, Hamilton still has a central core--let me tell you how much easier it is to plan a city with a heart. The Gore, all those heritage buildings on King East and James North, what potential! Take the new GO-Transit Centre (the former T.H. & B. Station), for example --it'll be the pride of the city, if not the province!"

Meanwhile urban planner Joe Grimm from Toronto overheard these remarks: "You're right. I didn't know this city has one of the most beautiful settings in all of Canada, just go to the High Level Bridge and take a look. Hamilton certainly knows how to take advantage of its natural heritage."

"When I was walking around the downtown, I could see that Hamilton has its problems with empty stores and vacant lots, like many cities these days. But I could hardly believe the architectural gems I discovered--street after street of authentic Victorian houses; commercial storefronts with stunning upper stories; a charming garden park in the middle of the core; not one, but two 1930's railroad stations, over a dozen historic churches, and a Custom House. So many discoveries in so little time!"

Shaking his head as he walked away he was heard muttering, "Hamilton is such a well kept secret, nobody will believe me back home".

anon.



HAMILTON'S PLAN FOR TOMORROW

Heritage: Legacy from the Past

The buildings and open spaces of a city reflect the time, place and manner of its growth. They create a 3-dimensional "living" record of the customs, tastes, technologies and achievements of former eras. Hamilton, a city whose history began in 1816, has inherited a rich and diverse collection of recognized heritage buildings, districts and places. Each period has left its mark on the cityscape in terms of style, materials, technology, etc. Briefly, the following provides clues to Hamilton's pre-modern development:

Pre-Confederation Era: noted for buildings of stone construction; located primarily in the downtown area; relatively few examples have survived due to redevelopment; Sandyford Place (1) and St. Paul's Presbyterian Church (6).

Victorian Era: noted for high-styled designs; brick construction; located primarily between Dundurn and Wentworth Streets; establishes character of older city; rich legacy of churches, residential neighbourhoods and commercial buildings (4); loss of most public buildings and 35 acres of downtown to redevelopment.

Early 20th Century: noted for variety of building types [industrial and office buildings, railroad stations (2) and (5), apartment houses, etc.]; new materials [steel (3), concrete, terra cotta, etc.]; and a vast amount of new development located primarily east of Wentworth St. and west of Dundurn St. to Westdale; urban fabric, now 50-90 years old, and still largely intact.

Heritage: Present Status

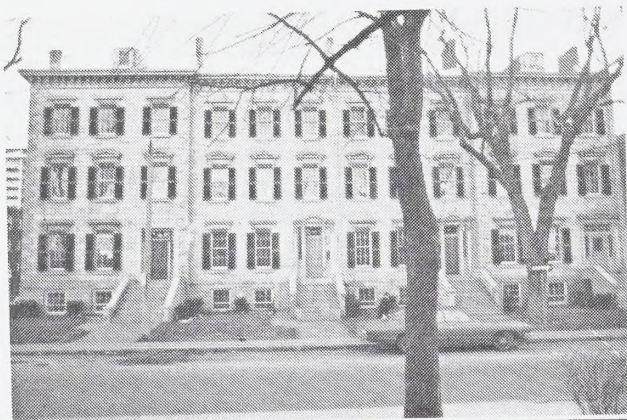
In Hamilton, over 200 buildings have been recognized as significant heritage buildings by the federal, provincial and municipal governments.

At the **federal level**, the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada has granted **8** buildings the highest honour of *National Historic Site*, including Sandyford Place (1), St. Paul's Presbyterian Church (6); and, most recently in 1995, Victoria Hall (4). Furthermore, both the CN Station (2) and the new GO-Transit Centre, formerly the T.H. & B. Station (5), have been designated under the Heritage Railway Stations Protection Act.

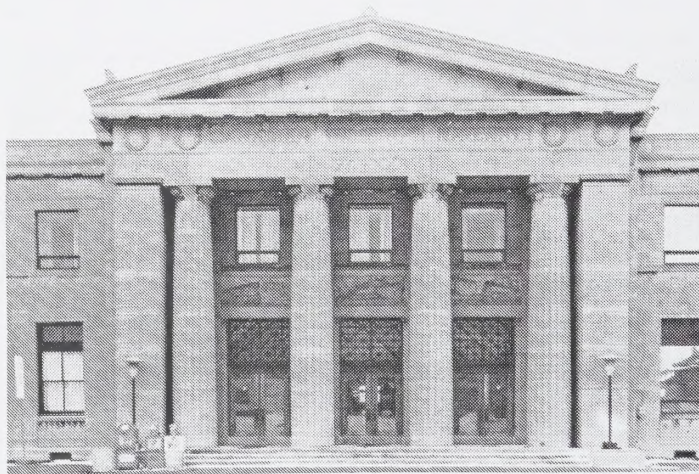
The **provincial government** has, likewise, recognized outstanding works of architecture in Hamilton through commemorative plaques and 11 heritage easements, including the High Level Bridge (3).

It is at the **municipal level**, however, where buildings and districts are formally *designated* under the Ontario Heritage Act. To date, Hamilton has 206 designated structures. Over half of these buildings are located in 4 heritage districts: Durand-Markland; MacNab-Charles; St. Clair Avenue and St. Clair Boulevard.

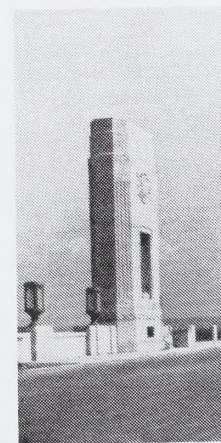
In addition, about 3,000 buildings are *listed* on the Inventory of Buildings of Architectural and Historical Interest. The surveys have concentrated on the older downtown neighbourhoods. No legal restrictions apply to listed buildings.



1. Sandyford Place, 39-45 Duke St.
Date: 1858-63



2. CN Station, 360 James St. North
Date: 1928-31



3. Thomas B. McCulloch Monument, York Boulevard
Date: 1928-31

Role of Heritage in City Planning

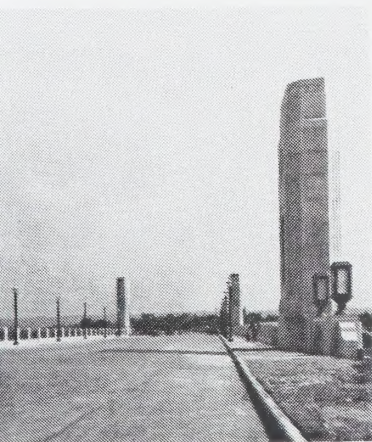
Before 1975, legislation did not exist to safeguard a community's heritage. Hamilton lost its old City Hall on James St. North in 1960 and the Birks Building on the Gore in 1973.

In 1975, because of mounting public concern, the *Ontario Heritage Act* was enacted to protect and conserve a community's important, non-renewable heritage resources. The heritage movement targeted important landmarks for preservation at a time when urban redevelopment was at its peak.

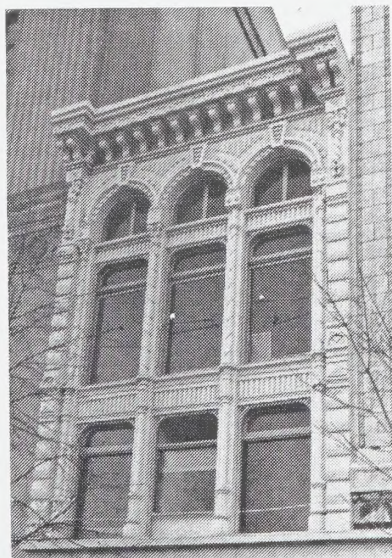
By the 1980's to the present, however, heritage conservation, as a world-wide movement, expanded beyond saving isolated landmarks to conserving entire downtown main streets, inner city residential areas, historic parks, geological features, waterfront areas, historic villages, etc. Re-cycling buildings for new uses has become a widespread tool in urban revitalization.

In terms of the future, urban conservation provides the foundation for re-introducing *physical planning* into the planning process. It is, after all, the physical design of the city--the scale, height, siting and massing of buildings and their relationship to open space--which gives the city a sense of place.

Buildings pre-dating the modern era offer an animated variety of styles, materials and decorative detailing; and at the same time, they work well together, respecting the traditions of human scale and community context. Such assets are essential to making the city a livable, attractive, and welcoming place to be.



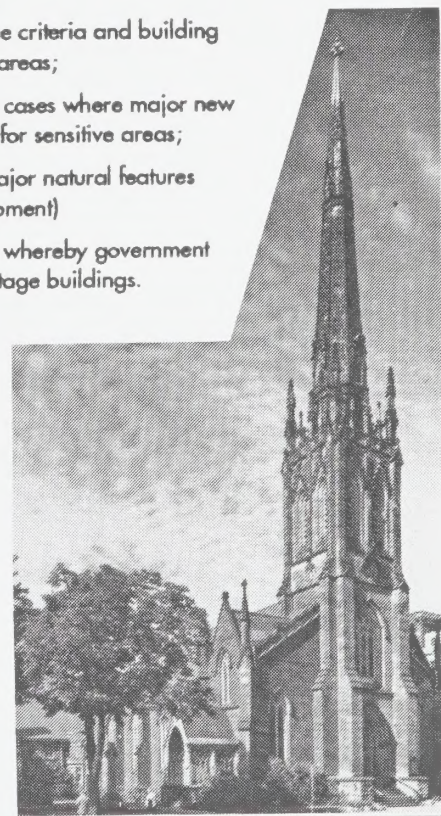
High Level Bridge,
1932



4. Victoria Hall, 68 King St. East
Date: 1887-88



5. GO Transit Centre (formerly T.H.& B. Station),
36 Hunter St. East Date: 1931-32



6. St. Paul's Presbyterian Church,
64 James St. South Date: 1854-57

The Future of Our Heritage

Need for New Policies

It should be recognized that current heritage legislation does not guarantee permanent protection against demolition of designated buildings. To safeguard our heritage for future generations, it is incumbent on the City to create policies in the Official Plan which will provide a long-term plan of management. The Regional Official Plan and Vision 2020 have already recognized the need for the stewardship of our resources.

New Opportunity

With the current preparation of a new Official Plan for Hamilton, there is the opportunity to incorporate a *greater emphasis on physical planning* for the purpose of creating a more dynamic and attractive environment, by using new techniques to supplement the standard land use planning process.

Public Participation

As part of the Official Plan process, you are invited to give your views on the future of Hamilton's heritage. Some ideas for better management of our historic resources include:

- ☐ innovative mixed use for existing buildings;
- ☐ adjustment in certain zoning or site plan requirements to facilitate re-use of buildings;
- ☐ in-fill guidelines, performance criteria and building envelopes for special policy areas;
- ☐ impact assessment studies in cases where major new developments are proposed for sensitive areas;
- ☐ protection of sight lines to major natural features (e.g., the Bay and the Escarpment)
- ☐ joint public/private ventures whereby government helps in the recycling of heritage buildings.

The Ontario Heritage Act

The current Ontario Heritage Act, passed in 1975, provides specific measures for the conservation of certain heritage resources. Both individual heritage buildings/structures, and heritage areas with a special character (*heritage conservation districts*) may be designated under this Act.

Designation provides recognition of the historical and architectural significance of a building or area; it provides some measure of protection from demolition (180-day delay) or unsympathetic alterations; and the owners of designated properties are eligible to apply for heritage funding to undertake conservation and restoration projects.

The proposed new Ontario Heritage Act embraces a more comprehensive vision and definition of heritage; and if enacted, it would provide better protection for heritage buildings and wider heritage conservation powers for municipal governments.

Bill Pr140 (An Act Respecting the City of Hamilton)

In the City of Hamilton, properties designated under the Ontario Heritage Act are now further protected by Bill Pr 140. This provincial statute (1994) extends the provisions of the City's *Demolition Control By-law* to all designated properties by allowing Council to issue a Demolition Permit only after the owner has obtained a Building Permit for the site. A new building must be built within two years from the date that the permit was issued.

Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee (LACAC)

LACAC is an advisory committee composed of five or more members, which is appointed by a municipal council (as provided for under the Ontario Heritage Act). The Hamilton LACAC was established in 1976. The primary role of this committee is to recommend buildings and districts for *designation* and to advise and assist City Council on other matters relating to the conservation of Hamilton's heritage resources.



For further information on this brochure, please contact Heritage Planning at (905) 546-4441.

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Bill 20 (Land Use Planning and Protection Act)

This provincial bill, scheduled for 3rd Reading in May 1996 followed by Royal Assent, will be accompanied by a *Provincial Policy Statement*. The following proposed policies relate to "Cultural Heritage and Archaeological Resources":

- 2.5.1 *Significant built heritage resources and cultural heritage landscapes will be conserved.*
- 2.5.2 *Development and site alteration may be permitted on lands containing archaeological resources or areas of archaeological potential if significant archaeological resources have been conserved by removal and documentation, or preservation on site.*

**From knowledge of our past
grows pride in the present and
confidence in the future.**

CITYVIEW

CityView Hamilton's Plan for Tomorrow is your opportunity to present your ideas and thoughts on the future of Hamilton.

Your ideas will ultimately form the basis of a new Official Plan for the City of Hamilton.

Staff of Hamilton's Planning and Development Department are available to answer your questions on any facet of CityView.

Ways to Contact Us...

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